

An interview with Winton Dennis Jones (1)

WINTON D. JONES

An Interview Conducted by
Robert L. Carter
June 24, 1981

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NARRATOR DATA SHEET

06/24/81

DATE

Name of narrator: Winton Dennis Jones

Address: 1308 S. 13-1/2 St., Terre Haute, IN 47802 Phone: 235-6650

Birthdate: 04/01/04 Birthplace: Terre Haute

Length of residence in Terre Haute: entire life except for some schooling in Indianapolis

Education: Wiley High School; Indianapolis College of Pharmacy, later Butler University.

Occupational history: self-employed as a pharmacist for 52 years at Jones Pharmacy

Special interests, activities, etc. Church, Kiwanis civic club, Hyte Center, Rose Southside Day Care Center, Big Brothers

Major subject(s) of interview: Terre Haute and blacks

No. of tapes: 2 Length of interview: 1 hr. 46 min.

Terms of legal agreement: _____

Interviewing sessions:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interviewer</u>
06/24/81	11 a.m.	Vigo County Public Library	Robert L. Carter

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WINTON D. JONES

Tape 1

June 24, 1981

Conference Room, Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, IN

INTERVIEWER: Robert L. Carter

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen M. Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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RLC: This is Robert Carter interviewing Winton D. Jones June 24, 1981, at the Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, Indiana.

Mr. Jones, we'll begin with your education. I think that you are a lifelong resident of Terre Haute. Is that . . .

JONES: Yes. I was born in Terre Haute and currently live in the same home I was born in, after having lived at my own home after being married for a period of about 40 years.

RLC: About 40 years. And have you always lived in the same neighborhood?

JONES: Yes. Prior to coming back to this . . . I was born in this house, 1308 South 13-1/2 Street. I attended the school there in the old Booker T. Washington School, down there about a square from where I was born. But that was the old school. Booker Washington School.

RLC: The Washington School?

JONES: Booker Washington School.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: And, incidentally, my mother and father both went to that school. My mother was born in Terre Haute.

RLC: Your mother was born in Terre Haute?

JONES: Yes.

RLC: And where was your father born?

JONES: He was born in Louisiana but he came here at the age of 4.

RLC: Oh! And when were your parents born? After the Civil War, I assume?

JONES: Oh, yes, yes. My father is 25 years older than I am; my mother is 23 years older than I am.

RLC: Well, that's interesting. So, you're . . . you know . . . you say your mother was born in Terre Haute.

JONES: In Terre Haute.

RLC: Where . . .

JONES: One square over . . . one block over.

RLC: (laughs)

JONES: (laughing) On 14th Street.

RLC: Now, where were her parents born?

JONES: They were born in North Carolina. North Carolina. Goldsboro, I think, or in the suburbs. And incidentally, I have a sister that taught there for a period of 40 years.

RLC: I see.

JONES: In the same place because she wanted to go there where her parents were . . . her grandparents were born.

RLC: So, your mother was an early Terre Haute resident, you might say?

JONES: Oh, yes. And incidentally my wife was born in Terre Haute, and her father was born in Terre Haute.

RLC: Oh! Well, that makes . . . you're a Terre Haute native.

JONES: Yes. Our roots are pretty deep here in Terre Haute.

RLC: Yes. And so, is there a particular name to the neighborhood where you live or have lived?

JONES: Well, a long time ago they called it "Baghdad," you know.

RLC: Baghdad?

JONES: Yeah. That's common history around here. I mean part of the history. The residents didn't like it that way, but almost every major city or city of

JONES: any size has a district where black people live that they give a nickname. And this was the nickname that was given to the south section of town.

RLC: The south central area.

JONES: Right. That was the biggest in the town where black people lived.

RLC: Now, could you roughly define the boundaries of this neighborhood?

JONES: It was 12th Street, from 12th to the railroad primarily.

RLC: That's the C. & E.I.?

JONES: Right. Well, there's the C. & E.I. and the Milwaukee & St. Paul. They have railroad tracks along there on the other side of 14th -- between 14th and 15th, 16th. Then around about the Cruft Street area there was another area that black people lived, around Cruft Street right on across the railroad.

RLC: East of the railroad.

JONES: It ran from 15th . . . from 16th to the railroad, just one block. (laughs)

RLC: Just one block?

JONES: Yeah. I mean it's two blocks rather, but I mean it wasn't a . . . it didn't go from College to . . .

Now, the other area was from College Avenue to Hulman Street and from 12th to the railroad.

RLC: Twelfth to the railroad?

JONES: Twelfth Street to the railroad.

RLC: But your neighborhood . . .

JONES: And the old school was at 13-1/2 Street and Dean.

RLC: Thirteenth-and-a-half and Dean -- Washington

RLC: School. Now, this was an elementary school?

JONES: It was an elementary school.

RLC: And where did you . . . did you go to junior high?

JONES: No. At the time that I finished school, I finished at Washington and came to Wiley.

RLC: Wiley . . .

JONES: Wiley High School, right here where this . . .

RLC: I remember Wiley.

JONES: I went there in 1918, I think it was.

RLC: You started in Wiley in 1918 then?

JONES: Yeah.

RLC: Well, was that the ninth grade you went to?

JONES: Well, yes. Of course, we didn't call it the ninth grade then; we called it the first grade of high school, see.

RLC: Right.

JONES: That was before they changed it since we didn't have junior high. We only had high school and elementary school.

RLC: So you were a freshman at Wiley in 1918?

JONES: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

After that, I went to the Indianapolis College of Pharmacy.

RLC: When you . . . as soon as you graduated from Wiley, you went there.

JONES: Yeah. It's now a part of Butler University, but it was Indianapolis College of Pharmacy at that time.

RLC: Oh, I see.

JONES: And, of course, it's become a part of Butler University, so I have a diploma from both of them.

RLC: Oh, fine!

JONES: And my son also went there.

RLC: How many children do you have?

JONES: I only have one son.

RLC: One son. And where does he live?

JONES: Lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Well, he lives out in Cincinnati; we call it Cincinnati. He lives in what's called Forest Park. Forest Park. He's a research chemist.

RLC: A research chemist?

JONES: A research chemist for the Dow Chemical.

RLC: Certainly there are more opportunities in Cincinnati or a larger city but . . .

JONES: Well, you see, he originally took pharmacy. He took pharmacy at Butler, and he took a bachelor's there and Master of Science in pharmacy. And then he took a Ph.D. at the University of Kansas in medicinal chemistry. So, he's in research. He didn't follow . . . he was a registered pharmacist, of course, but he didn't follow the line. So after he moved after my wife died, that is why I stopped.

RLC: But that's not too far away. Do you often go to visit him?

JONES: Not too much, not too often. No, I don't drive there much. I used to but as I get older, I don't much want to be on the road.

RLC: I know what you mean.

JONES: And I've got to get another car . . . the car's not so road worthy now.

RLC: No.

Well, this is interesting. I had never heard

RLC: that neighborhood referred to as Baghdad.

JONES: Well, that's an old reference. It isn't currently being done but . . .

RLC: No.

JONES: . . . oldtimers will know and that's a part of history.

RLC: How far north did this neighborhood extend?

JONES: Well, that was the area. Now, there were some black people that lived in other areas, but they didn't try to . . . you see you had about . . . really about three areas in Terre Haute itself. . .

RLC: When you were growing up.

JONES: . . . and they were inhabited by black people. And there was an area aound over on 1st and 2nd Street, see. And incidentally, they had a school over there at one time -- over on 2nd Street, a small school.

RLC: Was Washington school entirely black when you attended?

JONES: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

RLC: When you attended. But Wiley, of course, was integrated.

JONES: Yes. It was integrated as far as the student body [was concerned].

RLC: Were you excluded from certain activities at Wiley because of being black?

JONES: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. That was understood.

RLC: That was understood?

JONES: That was understood. Yes, there were a lot of funny little quirks then. You know in sports (of course, Dee /Demetrius Ewing/ mentioned that the other day, you know), but in sports you . . . of course, you have sports divided into two classes, contact and non-contact. And the sports that the

JONES: Negroes or black people were engaged in were primarily . . . at first, was track. And they were very good at track.

I didn't run track. I didn't engage in athletics.

But the funny . . . a little funny thing about it, now everyone got a ribbon, you know, at assembly. We had assembly hall; and everyone got a ribbon that placed first and second and third, you know. And the white girls would give the white boys their ribbons and the colored girls . . . if there was a colored girl, they'd give the colored people their ribbons. Anyway, of course, I think everybody felt pretty good about it in a way, but it was kind of silly. (laughs)

RLC: Yes, I see.

JONES: It was kind of silly, but that was the way it was done.

RLC: And the graduation ceremony from Wiley was integrated?

JONES: Yes, it was integrated, other than . . . you see that was before the time of the public assembly place -- the gymnasium where you could have graduation exercises. We used to have it in what was called the Grand Opera House. And the Grand Opera House was a building north of the current Terre Haute House, you know.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: It's been torn down, but the school system had all the high school graduation exercises there. And black people couldn't sit in there on the first floor; they had to sit upstairs in a reserved section for blacks. There was a section reserved for black people. And that's one of the things I rebelled against. I didn't take part in the exercises because of that. I felt like it was so unfair.

RLC: I see.

JONES: Because we had been required to do the same things that the other people had been required to do as far as grades and all the requirements were the

JONES: same for us as they were /for others/. But somehow, when we got there, our folks weren't allow to . . .

RLC: Sit on the main floor.

JONES: I just felt like it was so unfair that I didn't do it. Maybe I should have done it /taken a part/, but I didn't do it. (laughs) And there was a class, at the time that I went there, that didn't do it that time. Quite a number of them.

RLC: When did this practice stop? Or when was it discontinued?

JONES: As I recall, I don't think it . . . I don't think it really discontinued until we acquired /a gym in which to hold the commencement/. I don't believe it happened until they got away from the Grand Opera House, though.

RLC: When that was torn down?

JONES: And it wasn't the Grand Opera House /^{ts}/ fault. It wasn't the fault of the management there. That was the funny thing about it. Rather the school . . . that was the policy of the school. And I was just . . . I was kind of angered when I found out about it because I had gone to the management of the Grand Opera House to protest, and he said, "We don't care. We rent it to the school corporation, and they can do whatever they want to do with it that night."

So, I went back and told the principal about it. I was quite irate. (laughs) I told him. In fact, I just told him he hadn't told me the truth about it, which he hadn't.

RLC: But this practice continued until Wiley . . .

JONES: Well, I think it . . . I'm not sure. I couldn't be positive about the time that it . . . but it was quite a while. It was quite a while. I'd have to ask my sister about that because she finished after I did. I had a couple of sisters.

Well, I know when my younger sister /graduated/, it had been done away with then. And then you know after all when it becomes school property you know, you've got to do a little bit differently. See, they built Woodrow Wilson /Junior High School/, you

JONES: know.

RLC: After you attended Wiley. Yes.

JONES: And I think they had some graduation exercises out there for a while. That was quite a school when they first built it, you know.

RLC: Yes. It's a . . .

JONES: It's an oddity but it was a million dollar school; that was quite a thing. (laughs)

RLC: Did any blacks go there in the early days?

JONES: Yes, they went there. Uh-huh. They went there. Well, I tell you. Actually, they had a segregated system. See, after they started that . . . what do you call it? The 6-3-3 arrangement.

RLC: Um hm. Right.

JONES: They made junior high schools out of Washington and Lincoln. Lincoln School is out there on 16th and . . . that was the old Lincoln School. Then they finally . . . when they made that an elementary school -- the first six grades -- then they bused them down to . . . people from that area of town were bused down to Washington.

RLC: Washington.

JONES: And they made that a junior high school.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: That was . . . I don't know what year that must have been. About 1926 . . . it was after I was in business. I was in business when they did it.

I guess they saved some money, see, because they had to have these teachers . . . they taught beginning English and Latin, you know, math, algebra, and sometimes there were only about three or four kids in those classes, you know.

RLC: So, they had to combine them.

JONES: From the standpoint of economy it was very foolish and very wasteful to have junior high school where they didn't have /to do so/ just to keep people from going to school together, you know.

RLC: Right.

JONES: And so, that's what you had.

RLC: And then, immediately on your graduation from Wiley you went to Indianapolis to the College of Pharmacy. Where did you live when you were in school in Indianapolis?

JONES: When I first went there, I stayed with some friends. I didn't stay there very long because I got a job. I got a job on 28th /Street/ and Pennsylvania /Avenue/ with a private family.

RLC: Hmm. Working for a private family?

JONES: A private family. I cleaned house and waited table, that sort of thing. They were wealthy people. I had a room in the house.

RLC: On the premises, um hm.

JONES: . . . and I was tickled to death about that because that gave me a place to eat and a place to sleep.

RLC: Right!

JONES: And I was having a pretty hard time prior to that.

RLC: How long were you there?

JONES: Well, at that time that was only a two-year course. I was there for a pharmaceutical graduate degree. I had intended to take three /for a Ph.D. degree/. I didn't do it.

And I was only 20 years old when I got out.
(laughs) I had to wait a year to be able to take the state board examination.

RLC: Because you were too young.

JONES: I had to be 21.

RLC: I see. Uh-huh, sure.

JONES: So, I was 21 in April and took the state board. In fact, I only had ten days to . . . I think the examination occurred about the 12th of April and my birthday was on April the first. I had to have my application for the examination ten days before the thing. So, it was very close.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: And when I got through taking the examination . . . the examination was held at that time in the State House -- Senate chambers.

RLC: I see.

JONES: But the mechanical part of it -- that is, the actual filling of prescriptions and that sort of thing--was in the veterinary school. And by that time they had moved to the old veterinary school out on Market Street. That was the year after I'd finished. I took the physical part of it, and the oral and written part of it was in the State House.

RLC: And then you . . .

JONES: I came back immediately and started making arrangements to start a store.

RLC: Start your own store because it was . . .

JONES: And the reason, I couldn't get a job. I There were none of these fellows that would hire me because I was black.

RLC: I see. Now, you're speaking of drugstores in Terre Haute?

JONES: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, they wouldn't hire me. So, I got ready to start a store at 13th /Street/ and College /Avenue/, on the corner. I'd gone to one place; and he had told me . . . well, he wouldn't promise me any particular amount of money. He told me, "Well, I'll give you a job. You can come see what you can do. You can work in the prescription department, help keep it clean." At that time everybody was making their own citrate of magnesia

JONES: and ointments. "So, you can help," he said, "in other words, you'll be a high-class porter." That's what he told me. "I can't let you wait on anybody."

RLC: Ooh!

JONES: So, I didn't take the job.

RLC: No.

JONES: It was a disadvantage because I really didn't get the experience I needed, but I went on . . .

RLC: And started . . .

JONES: . . . trial and error method. Heh.

RLC: How did you find a store to conduct your business? Was that very difficult to find property?

JONES: Well, I went to 13th and College. At that time there was a grocery store on the corner, on the north corner of 13th and College. And there was a fellow who had a pool room on the other corner. But now the corner I wanted was the corner he had. (laughs) And I wanted that corner. But he told me, he said, "You go over and see that fella. He might let you have it." And he was an Assyrian, and he was kind of hard up. So he had another building, and so he moved his store out of there and let me have the front . . . let me have the corner store.

RLC: Did you say he was Syrian?

JONES: He was an Assyrian. He ran the grocery store. He owned the building, and he had another building that he could put his grocery store in. So, he let me have the front . . . right on the corner, and he moved his store in there. And I was there for 17 years.

RLC: And you rented it?

JONES: I rented it for 17 years beginning in 1925.

RLC: For 17 years.

JONES: Um hm.

RLC: Uh-huh. And it was . . .

- JONES: But he died in the meantime, and there were some . . . the daughter. They were pretty hard to get along with. I could only get a year's lease at a time. So, the last time, I just resolved I'd . . . in the meantime I had bought the land that I still own. I had 77 feet up there with a house on it, so I resolved I'd build me a building. So, I built a building in 1942. That was a year after my son was born. I was married in 1940. I didn't get married until I was 36. (laughs)
- RLC: I see. But you built a building in 1942 at 13th and College?
- JONES: Well, you see, if you're familiar with that area, there's an oil station on the corner /at/ 13th and College across from Hyte Center.
- RLC: Right. Uh-huh.
- JONES: Next door is a yellow brick building. I own that building. That's where I had . . . that's where I built the store.
- RLC: Um hm.
- JONES: And I still own it but . . . (laughs) I wish I could get rid of it almost. But that's what happened to me. So, I kept it going.
- RLC: So, until 1942 you rented and then you moved into your own building?
- JONES: Yes, 17 years. I have a total of 52 years /that/ I operated a store. I was 21 years old when I started.
- RLC: Yes.
- Well, during all that time, did you meet a lot of interesting people in the store?
- JONES: Oh, yes. I met people from every place. Yes. All over the country.
- RLC: Uh-huh. Were people passing through Terre Haute, you say, from all over the country?

JONES: Oh, yes. Well, you see, we had a strange pattern at that time. You see, that was one of the reasons I wanted to start a store. You see, at the time I started this store all the /drug/ stores had soda fountains and lunch counters. I wanted a store because my people couldn't eat anyplace downtown.

RLC: I see.

JONES: They couldn't do it. In fact, they were doing it all over the country. You couldn't. In the south, you'd go in the back. Here you couldn't. You had to take it /food/ out if you got it. Most of the time you couldn't get it. Most businesses -- white -- wouldn't even bother with you.

But . . . and the funny . . . strange thing about it, I think that the other druggists were kind of glad I did . . . did it. They didn't seem to be rivals particularly at that time. They seemed to be interested in the fact that I had a store and that it was one that catered to my people. I was going to relieve them of a lot of embarrassment because a lot of them had good /Black/ customers that were buying their drugs there and yet they couldn't . . . if they had a pill, they couldn't get a drink of water at the fountain to take it. So see, it was kind of a funny thing.

And so that fulfilled a need in Terre Haute for a number of years.

RLC: Oh, yes!

JONES: Until it got to be integrated, see. Of course, that was true up at Indiana State. You couldn't . . . they were segregated up there, too, you know. You couldn't . . . they'd serve cokes -- they didn't have a cafeteria -- but you couldn't drink a coke in the bookstore; you had to take it outside, see.

RLC: Blacks?

JONES: Blacks. And blacks there, they had a place there to eat their lunch down in the basement and a study room at that place. All of us oldtimers know about that place down in the basement where the blacks congregated and used the study room there in the basement.

RLC: Now, blacks went to Indiana State during your lifetime?

JONES: Oh, yeah. But at one time they were just there. (laughs heartily) They were just there.

RLC: Just there. (laughs)

JONES: Just there. And that's what . . . that was the attitude. But there were a lot of very fine students there . . . went there and finished there. My sister finished there. I had two sisters finish there.

RLC: And then when they graduated, many of them probably had difficulty finding jobs.

JONES: Yeah. They went south. My older sister went and taught in Goldsboro for a number of years. My younger sister taught in Florida. She retired in Florida. In fact, she has a master's from Indiana State, and she was a counselor down there. When she retired, she was a counselor in a white school (laughs) in an integrated school.

RLC: I see.

JONES: But it wasn't so here. And that was one of the weak points.

RLC: In the Terre Haute school system? They hired blacks only to work in black schools, you're saying?

JONES: Yeah. See, as a result of that . . . see, you couldn't be a high school teacher because there wasn't anyplace for you to teach. (laughs)

RLC: Now, when did all this change? With the . . . what was it 19 65 or 19 64 . . .

JONES: Aaaaah, yeah, that changed along in there. It was changing a little bit, but it hadn't changed very much.

RLC: It hasn't changed?

JONES: I say it hadn't really changed until then.

RLC: Until then.

JONES: Substantially.

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RLC: So, you opened a soda fountain and . . .

JONES: Drugstore.

RLC: . . . drugstore. In your drugstore, did you serve sandwiches, lunches?

JONES: I didn't serve sandwiches at first. I only had ice cream sundaes and malted milks.

RLC: I see.

JONES: And it was quite a nice thing. People appreciated it a whole lot because they had no place to go.

RLC: No place to go. But did you later serve lunch?

JONES: Yes, I always had . . . I tried it several times; I did finally have a full lunch. I had a full lunch for a number of years.

RLC: Was it a fairly . . .

JONES: I had a grill. Yes, I did quite well with it. You see, I did quite well with it before integration because I served people from all over the country. The funny thing about it, all the people and merchants downtown would send them to me.

RLC: I see. (chuckles)

JONES: Really, it wasn't right, but that's the way it was done. And they were tickled to death to have someplace they could send them because they were all embarrassed, but they still wouldn't do it. They still wouldn't do it [serve blacks].

RLC: Now, when you say you had people from all over the country, do you mean black people?

JONES: Oh, yes!

RLC: . . . driving through Terre Haute?

JONES: Yeah. That's right. That's right. You see, you have a lot of people going from town to town; and that's always been one of the problems -- public accommodations, someplace to stay and someplace to eat.

RLC: Was there anyplace in Terre Haute where blacks could get a hotel room? A room for the night?

JONES: Yes, we had a black hotel at 3rd and Cherry.

RLC: Third and Cherry?

JONES: Third and Cherry. /The Redd Hotel and Herman Booker Tavern/

RLC: And that was the only one for only blacks?

JONES: Yes, that was the only one.

RLC: That was open.

JONES: Those things were born of necessity, see, you know. And of course, they went out after . . . of course, urban renewal did that you know. And it went out after that because there wasn't any need for it, you know.

RLC: No. Well, could blacks stay at the YMCA or the YWCA?

JONES: Oh, no! You couldn't belong to the YMCA!

RLC: You couldn't belong?

JONES: No! No.

RLC: Oh, my!

JONES: No. I tell you my boy . . . my boy is 40 years old. He was quite popular with boys. He ran track and he was a good student, went to Wiley. And he went over there; and he swam in that pool with the class, you know. And so, in the evening I thought surely they were going to open the membership rolls to black students. So, I gave him some money to get a membership. They didn't take him. Now, that was when he was in high school, and it was about . . . let me see.

RLC: He's 40 now.

JONES: Yeah, he's 40. He finished the 8th year. He was born in '41. He was 18 in 1959. That must have been in the 1950s.

RLC: Late '50s.

JONES: But they've changed. Now, you can stay . . . some of the boys are staying there now. People belong to the Y. Of course, the YMCA accepted memberships much sooner than the . . .

RLC: Than the YMCA.

JONES: . . . than the YMCA. They were slow, but they did finally accept them. I don't think they really solicit them now, but they do accept them.

RLC: Um hm.

Well, do you think Terre Haute was very different from other midwestern communities?

JONES: No. No.

RLC: You think it was pretty much . . .

JONES: No. I think it was substantially the same thing. You know small towns It's more noticeable in small towns than it is in big cities because in the big cities they have places where black people can be accommodated. But they're segregated.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: In many cases, usually Italians own those places. They're white-owned and patronized exclusively by black people. Sometimes they're managed by black people; they have black employees. And sometimes you would hardly know it wasn't a white institution -- only the fact that come around late at night when the check-up time comes, the manager or the owner would be there to check the money out. So, you know who owns it. But that's the way it is.

JONES: And of course, a lot of those people felt like those were integrated things, but those weren't integrated things. Anytime you have anything that's separated . . . that is separate and it's only patronized by one group of people, that's [a] segregated facility.

RLC: Right.

Now, I understand you did have some white customers in your store.

JONES: Oh, yes. I've always had them.

RLC: Were they mostly . . .

JONES: They were people in the neighborhood. They were people . . . of course, when I quit I had quite a number of them. But originally, I didn't. And the funny thing about it, they weren't sure they were supposed to come in. (laughs) The white people.

See, they . . . they didn't know whether they would be accepted. And in many cases, the black people resented their being there. They resented it because that's a reaction to the fact that they had been discriminated against. And they thought if they had a place, why they ought to do the same thing to the other people that was done to them. So that was part of it, you know.

A lot of this stuff is reaction, you know. It isn't actual prejudice, but . . .

RLC: Did you have just a counter? Or did you ever have tables where people . . .

JONES: Oh, yes. Well, funny thing about it now, I had booths when I first started. I had booths, and I guess the first booths in Terre Haute. Because most people had these round Coca Cola tables you know with these wires /legs/. The booths were later you know. And I had mine made when I first opened.

RLC: I see.

JONES: I had them made out there at the planing mill.

RLC: Now, what year did you open your business?

JONES: Nineteen /hundred/ twenty-five.

RLC: Nineteen /hundred/ twenty-five.

JONES: In fact tomorrow will be my anniversary of that. It's on the 25th.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: No, I take that back. I was open on the 20th. My wedding anniversary is the 25th. Everything happened to me on the 20ths -- June 20ths -- /my/ wedding anniversary, I started in business the 20th, 25th, and my son was born the 23rd. And I had all those things and when I built that building, I broke ground in the week of the 20th! (chuckles) So, the 20ths have been a very important time for me, June the 20ths.

RLC: Right.

Well, did you ever notice integrated conversations in your store? Blacks and whites sitting at a table together and discussing, oh, politics or local news or anything of that nature?

JONES: Yes. You know every neighborhood has always had some people that . . . of course, that's true of black people and true of white people We had some white people that had lived in the area for a long time. I knew them, and some of them I grew up with. /I/ didn't go to school with them, but I grew up with them. I knew them and played with them. And those people, they never looked white. We never regarded them as white.

RLC: I see.

JONES: I had a fellow lived right down the street from me. Very fine person. Matter of fact, there on College Avenue they're almost . . . on the north side of College Avenue between 13-1/2 /Street/, those are all white people. They were customers of mine. And a lot of those kids grew up. I'd see them every day. The kids that grew up on 12th Street, 11-1/2 Street, 11th Street, I'd see them all the time. They were friendly.

RLC: So, there would be neighborhood-type conversation?

JONES: Yeah, there was neighborhood type. Of course, you know that thing is kind of a funny thing. It's a thing that you can't understand sometime. That people are . . . as kids they do very well until they get to be adolescents. And when girls get to be in the situation, then the thing changes a whole lot. There are a whole lot of men would get along all right if it weren't for the women. And that's true of both of them -- both groups of people. That seems to be

JONES: the dividing line.

RLC: Um hm. Then they wanted to date?

JONES: Well, I don't know that that would be it. But you know this has been . . . this thing of prejudice has been built so much around, you know, marriage that they can't separate the two. (laughs) Can't separate the two. To be integrated and to socialize together always means inter-marriage to some people. It doesn't to me. Now, for instance, I have never dated a white girl in my life, never did want to. The funny thing about it, my wife was very fair /complexioned/ though. My wife was very fair. She was as fair as most white people, but she was black. And the funny thing about it, I worked with . . . I don't know whether you want me to go off on this tangent or not?

RLC: Well, I . . .

JONES: Well, I think maybe it might be relevant though. It might give you some insight into racial problems and tensions.

I'm a Methodist. I was on an interracial team that went around through the countryside talking about racism. We've had several workshops on that.

RLC: In Methodist churches?

JONES: Yeah, in the Methodist church. Well, in fact the Methodist church has done quite a bit. I belong to the United . . . I've always been a Methodist. I just came back from the conference last week.

RLC: There are many Methodists in Terre Haute.

JONES: Oooh, yes! It's a great church.

But anyhow, I was on this group. I was the only black on the group. And you know, the district superintendent was on the group. So, we went through small towns particularly -- you know, we'd give them the idea about racism. I'd never taken my wife but I took her that time. And everybody got mad when they saw her because they thought she was white.

RLC: They thought she was white?

JONES: Yeah. She was very fair. She was very fair, but she wasn't white. And that's one of the funny things, too.

But anyhow, in the course of the evening they found out that she wasn't white (laughs). And when they found out she wasn't white, she suddenly was as black as me . . . as I was! Which means that race or black is not a color; it's an image that people have of black people.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: If there is any black blood in them, they're just as black as the rest of them, see. Because they can't do any more than anybody else. There can be prejudice or discrimination or whatever it is. See, these real light people are discriminated against the same as the black one.

And that's really the reason for the term "black." The term "black" comes about because of the fact that this is an all-inclusive term. It covers all the people whether they've got a drop of blood that's black or they're very fair or they're real black. It covers all of them.

So, there was a time when people would resent that term, but they don't resent it now -- not any of the younger people. Some of the older people that are older than I am or as old as I am do. I don't resent it myself. But there was a time that would have been a fighting word.

RLC: I see.

JONES: It isn't any more. I may have strayed off a little bit, but I thought maybe you might want to know that.

RLC: Yes, that's interesting. So you . . . for a time you traveled to . . . were these nearby towns, mostly in Indiana?

JONES: Oh, yeah. They were small towns mostly. You see the most people that think they don't have race problems -- any problems with race -- they're bound to have a problem. They never . . . they say, "I don't bother with it." They never talk to them.

JONES: They've never seen anybody. They don't talk to them; they never . . . they don't know anything about them! So [they think] they don't have a problem. But what they don't know is what they would do if they were in close proximity [to blacks] as some of those people in the South. See, you know the people in the North don't do any better than the people in the South when a lot of people get together.

RLC: Right.

JONES: They don't meet the problem any better than the people in the South. You can tell that when you look at Boston and any other place where they have all these race problems. Chicago. They don't do any better. [They don't communicate.] There's no difference in the North and South -- only in the numbers. When they get a lot of people together and they've got to deal with the problem, they don't do any better than the rest of them. And in fact, I think the South has done a better job than the North! (laughs) Now, on this integration, they're doing much better than the North.

RLC: Now?

JONES: Doing much better. I think they're doing much better.

RLC: And you mentioned that your sisters had gone South to teach. Do you think many black young people in Terre Haute would like to move South to get a job? There's a trend . . .

JONES: Oh, they're a lot of them going south. But you know there's a lot of misinformation about the South, see. They don't know very much about the opportunities in the area. There are a lot of opportunities in the South. You see tomorrow we are thinking the big problem in the North or anyplace as far as . . . the people that have the problems are the people that are uneducated and unskilled. This is not only true of black people, it's true of white people. These are the people in poverty and a lot of them are white.

But black people are worse than anybody else because they're not only poor, they're black. Now, if a person's white and poor, you don't know it necessarily -- particularly if he's got any kind of cultural

JONES: advantage. You know, if he's been exposed and he adjusts and everything, you wouldn't know it. But a black person can be as well dressed as anybody else, but you'd always suppose that he's going to be . . . you're going to be prejudiced anyhow for the most part because he's black. So, he's got some strikes against him because he's not only poor, he's black, too! (laughs) So as I see it, that's what the problem is here; and that's what the future is going to depend on.

RLC: Where do black youths who graduate from school in Terre Haute . . . let's say, ISU, for example . . . where do they generally look for jobs first?

JONES: Well, you know the placement bureau does quite a bit for them, you know? Of course in our placement bureau they're more than likely going to place them in black schools or in line demand for them. And a lot of them would rather be there. Because, say . . . it isn't any fun being in a racial society anywhere you have limited acceptance. See, that's always one of the problems, you know.

RLC: It puts you under more tension.

JONES: Oh, yeah. Well, you know you not only teach, you've got to have some free time. And where are you going during your free time? Are you going to be accepted? Are the people you work for, are they going to take you out socially? Or are they going to eat with you? Are they going to take you to their party? Are they going to drink with you or are they going to leave you at home? (laughs) So, that's what you've always got to worry with.

RLC: Right.

JONES: It's a continuing problem. Even when . . . you see, when people have acceptance of the law, they're not always integrated fully, see, because there's some place you gotta stop. You're really not a part of it to all practical purposes. I think, to a lot of people that's not too important. But if you ever went into a community where you were the only black person there, you'd have a hard time. And a lot of people won't go into a community where they're the only black.

RLC: I see. So they wouldn't want to go to South Dakota where the laws might be very liberal because they'd be the only black but . . .

JONES: Yeah. They've always been very liberal up there. But I know the boys that played baseball, they used to go up there and play up in there and they'd talk about it. But they still weren't too happy. Because, I don't know, there was always a little difference there someplace. Some people accepted them and some people didn't. (laughs) It was always that you know.

RLC: Surely.

JONES: But when the masses of people don't accept you, you know, you have a problem. And with the masses there've always been people that have always . . . you've been able to get along with.

RLC: Um hm.

I think we ought to go back in time a little bit now and reminisce on your early experiences. You opened your shop in 1925. And what was Terre Haute like in 1925 compared with today? How was it different from today? In general?

JONES: Well, what are you talking about? The economy or are you talking about the race relationship?

RLC: Well, let's say the lifestyle -- the way people lived and what they thought about mainly, as opposed to today.

JONES: Well, of course, there was quite a bit of difference between lifestyles of the economic . . . well, the economic strata was the thing that determined what kind of lifestyle you had. You see, you had a lot of people that lived in unpaved and unsanitary conditions all over the city. This was not only black. These were white people, too. You had Taylorville and I guess you've heard about that -- these people that had to run out every year and be washed out, you know. And they just lived on the refuse of the city.

And we had a whole lot of black people that didn't have . . . they had outside toilets; and they had, you know, no running water, no paved streets, no paved

JONES: sidewalks. You see there were a lot of those things.

As the economy gets better you know, the conditions improve. After the time of the New Deal -- the so-called New Deal, you know -- there was a chance to borrow money and to do these things. And there was public improvement, even to the outside toilet which the . . . WPA /Works Progress Administration/ toilets, you know. You've heard about those. Well, that improved the lot of a lot of people 'cause they had those things. And they /their old outhouses/ were smelly, about to fall down and everything else. So I think you'd have to say that they were pretty poor.

RLC: Did black people have electricity in the /19/ 20s?

JONES: Oh, yes. Well, there were a lot of people that did. Of course, you know that there's practically no one that doesn't have electricity now. But there were a lot of people that had lamps. Sure, a lot of people had lamps. The grocery stores all sold lamps, some using coal oil, kerosene, you know.

RLC: But you always had electricity in your store?

JONES: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. The store I was in when I first came there, they had gas so they had gas for those lights, you know, that are burned by gas. And there were a lot of stores that had those. I had electricity. I've always had it.

RLC: Did Prohibition have much effect in Terre Haute?

JONES: Well, Prohibition affected everybody you know. It made illegal people out of a lot of people, and it expanded the job opportunities or the ability to make a job. There were bootleggers that made home brew before the . . . you know, during that period. And there were roadhouses. The boys who knew how to play instruments and play pianos and drums, they got booked at these places, you know -- and the cooks that fried fish and that sort of thing.

RLC: They were all illegal businesses?

JONES: Well, that was all illegal . . . and the gambling and so forth. It, I guess, expanded the economy to an extent, though, because, it gave some opportunities to people . . . for some people to be self-employed, I guess you might say. I don't know that it had . . . I think it had just about the same impact on the black

JONES: people as it had on the white people. I know the black people that had these places; that some of them catered to white people and some of them didn't. Of course, most of the black people couldn't go to these roadhouses. For the most part they were run by white people.

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1-SIDE 2

RLC: How did the Ku Klux Klan affect life in Terre Haute in the '20s, largely? I'm thinking of the '20s but even later.

JONES: You know, I'm not too familiar with the Klan. I've heard a lot about the Klan. I was over in Indianapolis during the Ed Jackson period.

RLC: The Ed Jackson's . . .

JONES: . . . and D. C. Stevenson . . . yeah. And I read quite a bit about them, but I've actually had no known contact with Klansmen. I have heard of a lot of people that was supposed to have been Klan . . . to have belonged to the Klan.

RLC: In Terre Haute?

JONES: Yes. And I don't know. You know, I think sometimes these people were forced into organizations that they didn't particularly already believe in. I think some of the people I had heard of as being Klansmen, I don't know that they really subscribed to everything the Klan represented or not. But I think they were afraid not to be in it.

RLC: Hmm. There was intimidation?

JONES: I think there was some intimidation. The only thing /is/ I suspect any kind of organization that limits its membership because I know that if they limit their membership, then they must be opposed to the people that are excluded; and these are /in the case of the Klan the Catholics and the Jews and the blacks. Most of them always said to me, "Well, I'm not against . . ." Of course, I guess some of them weren't against all three of them. Some of them were against . . . the merchants, I guess, were against the Jews for the most part. And it seemed to be an economic thing because

JONES: they just hated to see them have the business, and they were trying to get people to boycott the Jews. And, of course, the poor whites were against the blacks because they thought the blacks were taking their jobs -- and the foreign-born. So, these were the reasons -- some of them. I don't think all of them had the same reason. But I really hadn't . . . don't have any specific thing or experience with the Klan itself. I did see a parade once over in Indianapolis. I did see a parade once. That's the only thing I've really ever seen.

RLC: Was that in the '20s.

JONES: Yeah.

RLC: Now, after the Depression, was the Klan as strong as it had been in the '20s or did that sort of change things?

JONES: During the Depression . . . during the Depression it was pretty strong.

RLC: During the Depression?

JONES: Yeah.

RLC: People felt . . .

JONES: The so-called American-born felt they had to work against the blacks and the foreign-born, and they claimed . . .

RLC: Because of the scarcity of jobs?

JONES: Yeah, see, scarcity of jobs. Actually, you know that's the thing that happened to black people anyhow because when the economy gets bad, they always suffer. When the economy's good, they always make some progress.

RLC: Well, do you remember any incidents during the Depression that would sort of highlight feelings at that time toward blacks or toward life in general in Terre Haute? Of course, there was the general strike in 1935.

JONES: Oh, yes, yes. And that didn't seem to have too much effect on blacks. You see at that time blacks

JONES: didn't belong to organized labor. See, outside of the hod carriers, they weren't in it.

RLC: I see. As recently as 1935, they weren't?

JONES: Oh, yeah. See, they never . . . they weren't in the skilled trades. They were practically excluded, you know. You had that apprenticeship program that excluded them. There was no white person that would take them in. And there was no black person that belonged in there, so they couldn't be in it.

RLC: Um hmm.

JONES: And one of the industries that excluded the black people almost entirely is in the brewing industry.

RLC: The which?

JONES: Brewing industry, beer business.

RLC: Excluded the blacks entirely.

JONES: See, that's been kind of a thing that's been handed down from family to family, and people who worked there would be brewmasters and things like that. And they've never taken black people in. And they're still not in there. (laughs) Still not in it.

And, of course, a lot of the crafts weren't in it. They /blacks/ were always in the mining industry because, I don't know, somehow or other they were in there. Now, they always kind of liked John Lewis on account of that. They thought he was quite a . . .

RLC: Because he admitted the blacks?

JONES: Yeah. Of course, they were in . . . this was a job that a lot of people didn't want either, you know. Of course, it's a whole lot easier to get a job that nobody else wants, you know. (laughs)

RLC: Right. Absolutely. (laughs)

JONES: See they're in sanitation. All over the country, blacks are in sanitation, you know.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: Not too many people want in that! (laughs)
They had a union, too, you know.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: The blacks are in it.

RLC: Uh-huh.

But how did the general strike affect people in Terre Haute -- the blacks and whites both? Did it make a lot of economic hardship for people for a while?

JONES: I didn't think it lasted that long. I was in business at that time. I had to go out of town to get the ice and things -- supplies for the store. I couldn't . . . I went over to Brazil and got things 'cause they weren't on strike over there, you know. But I didn't think it affected us here.

Of course, the big thing was, I think, the unpleasant publicity that we got out of it, you know. It's . . .

RLC: The community?

JONES: Yeah. You know, there are a lot of industries that don't like to come to a city where there's that kind of unrest among the laboring people.

RLC: Right. Right.

JONES: And this has been known . . . Brazil, see . . . /Jimmie/ Hoffa and there are quite a number of /those/ fellows that came from this area, you know. So, it's always been something. Of course, Eugene V. Debs is from this area.

RLC: I wonder . . . I neglected to ask you earlier, did you ever have an occasion to meet Debs or . . .

JONES: I've seen him. I was quite young when that . . .

RLC: When he died.

JONES: . . . or when he was running, you know.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: Of course, everybody thought of him as kind of a radical then, see. I was in high school then, you know.

RLC: How did the black community generally respond to Debs?

JONES: Well, you see at that time black people were almost tied to the Republican party. And nobody did anything unless they were Republican. And most of the leadership were . . . people of the leadership were Republican. It was almost a sin for a black person to be a Democrat. Now it's almost a sin to be a Republican. (laughs)

RLC: (laughs)

JONES: And that thing has changed so much. But now, all these splinter parties have never had too much chance with blacks. I think at the time of Teddy Roosevelt . . . I think he had a lot of people that voted for him. I know my father was a Bull Mooser. (laughs)

RLC: I see. I see.

JONES: I remember that. I was quite young then, but I remember that.

RLC: Um hm. How about La Follette in 1924? Did blacks support him?

JONES: I don't think . . . not too much. Not too much. No.

RLC: Uh-huh. But they did Teddy Roosevelt in . . . when was it?

JONES: Oh, yeah. Yes.

RLC: Nineteen [hundred] four or . . .

JONES: Um hm. Yeah, I liked Roosevelt.

RLC: How about Wallace? Henry Wallace in 1948? Was there much black support for him?

JONES: Yes, there was. Yeah, there was some for him.

JONES: Yes. 'Cause he had been considered a liberal, and he was a Democrat and those people had gone to the Democratic party then.

RLC: By that time.

JONES: And he was fighting those people down South. See, that was the thing that these people were wearing those Wallace and Nerer buttons and things like that you know. (laughs) So, they were for anybody that . . . there was a definite split in the Democratic party at that time.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: See, prior to that . . . prior to the time of /Franklin/ Roosevelt, see, black people didn't go for the Democrats.

RLC: The Democrats, but Roosevelt made the difference?

JONES: Yes. He made the difference. Then you can't get them away from it now.

RLC: Would you say the Terre Haute black community nowadays is almost entirely Democratic?

JONES: Yes, I would say so. I think that the people have shown that they think of it as being in the political arena. I don't happen . . . I've always been a Republican myself. I even voted for this boy! (laughs heartily) But I had some misgivings about it, but I did think that . . . and this is off the record, too, I guess a little bit . . . But I did think that Carter was a little inept. I thought he was a good man, but I didn't think he was going to get the job done. My boy said he couldn't vote for him, so he voted for John . . . what's his name?

RLC: Anderson?

JONES: Anderson. He'd already said he couldn't vote for Reagan, so he (laughs) had no . . . which is nothing you know.

RLC: It sounds like there might have been quite a bit of diversity in this past election (laughs) among blacks.

JONES: You're right. There was. There was an awful lot of people that just . . . I think most of them voted for Carter though.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: They believed Carter was a good man, but I didn't think Carter'd get the job done. I think he was very inept.

RLC: Um hm.

Well, are blacks in Terre Haute becoming more involved in politics than they were say in the '20s and '30s, do you think?

JONES: No. No, unfortunately, I don't think they're any more involved. I think that there are people who want to be in the leadership area that want to gain by what they do in politics. I've never been in partisan politics. Actually, I never did want to be in it, really. I haven't taken a real active part in it. I was always on a non-partisan group. Of course, I worked with a non-partisan school-board group for a long time.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: I (laughs) . . . we had an organization going, we got beat once. Politicians beat us. It wasn't supposed to be a political organization. This group of people, they wanted good government and wanted the school board out of politics. It was in politics for a while.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: And it was in Republican politics. Then it got to be in Democrat politics.

RLC: Why did the black community change when Roosevelt came in? Because largely of the Depression or because of the New Deal's programs were so interesting to blacks?

JONES: That was it. That was it.

RLC: And can you name specific programs that blacks were . . . of Roosevelt that blacks were particularly fond of?

JONES: Oh, the WPA . . . any of these programs that . . . any programs that they believed would help them.

RLC: Would lift them out of their poverty and . . .

JONES: And imagination's the only thing that offered any hope. You see, of course, I think the climate of the whole country was such that they were willing to listen to a new leader.

RLC: Right.

JONES: And that's true of Reagan. I don't know whether he's going to do right or not, but they said, "We've got to do something." And I think that the thinking of the country was different. Because we had a Reconstruction Finance Corporation under Hoover, which was started with a two-billion-dollar base they had to lend to people. It was along the theory that people ought to do for themselves and that charities shouldn't be sponsored by the government at all. And it wasn't any time after Roosevelt became President that they were actually giving money away. Not lending it to them, but giving it away.

And so this represents a change of philosophy to me that meant that people had . . . the philosophy had changed to a point where they were saying that the government does have some responsibility to take care of the people when they can't do for themselves. And prior to that, there'd been private charities that had been on a voluntary basis that had been doing for people that were poor and hungry. And this was not enough because . . . matter of fact there wasn't anybody [to do it].

RLC: The Depression was so far reaching.

JONES: No. It was hurting everybody, too. And so the government was really the only agency that could really do anything. And it was on a mandatory basis. It wasn't on a basis of do you want to do it or not, which public charity . . . I mean just private charities were on that basis, you know. They do or they don't. They don't have to. I think that's where the change came about.

RLC: How did the WPA affect Terre Haute mainly? What were some projects that were particularly important in Terre Haute?

JONES: Well, of course, we had streets and we had toilets and we had home improvements. [Reforestation CC Camps]

RLC: Home improvements?

JONES: Yeah, there were some home improvements. But it mostly /was/ made work you know. They were working on the streets and curbs and . . . of course, we're still doing that, you know. I was on the /Terre Haute/ Redevelopment Commission for ten years, and I was president for four years. But I resigned last year because I had some things I wanted to do and there was going to be a conflict of interest. But that's what they're doing, too, you know, primarily.

RLC: Making work for young . . .

JONES: Well, it's not all . . . well, it is. But it's supplementing what the city ought to be doing and can't do. Streets and sidewalks. And the public parks. Of course, we re-built the two fire stations. Then Spencer Park there -- development.

RLC: Spencer Park. That's on the north side, isn't it?

JONES: Yes, that's out there on Eighth Avenue.

RLC: Eighth Avenue and 14th Street, is it?

JONES: Yeah.

RLC: Uh-huh. Yes. I noticed it.

JONES: That's quite a project.

RLC: It looks very nice.

JONES: I was in there when they were doing that (laughs), so I started that one. I was in on the two fire stations, too, but I resigned last fall.

RLC: Do black people make adequate use of the parks in and around Terre Haute and the recreational facilities?

JONES: Yes, I think they're doing very well there. I was out through Deming Park yesterday, and they said that it is being attended more by black people -- proportionately, you know -- than other people.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: Of course, you know . . .

RLC: Which includes the swimming pool . . .

JONES: Yeah.

RLC: . . . and all these facilities.

JONES: Well, there was a time they couldn't do it, you know. See, we had Washington Park down there where the Hyte Center is now. They had a swimming pool.

RLC: And that was exclusively for blacks?

JONES: That was a black swimming pool.

RLC: Um hm. Was the park exclusively for blacks?

JONES: Yeah. Well, I . . . well, it was. That was the implication.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: That was the implication, but you know that there was a swimming pool built on 1st Street over there, and, of course, they only had one. And, of course, at that time the black people wanted to swim over there. So at the time they said if you just wait awhile, we'll build you one over there and then you won't have that problem with integration because there were no pools integrated.

Actually, black people all over the country couldn't swim in the pool, that's all. If there were a black one, you just didn't swim in the other one, that's all. It was for white people when it was built. They built this one for white people. But they both have been torn down (laughs), you know. They had a bond on them, and they couldn't tear them down for awhile. And they paid off the bond, and then they could tear them down. But that's the way that was.

But there has been acceptance. There are a lot of people that felt that they shouldn't have accepted it. And there were a lot of people /who/ didn't want

JONES: to accept it. This has been a thing that's been divided opinion - whether the black people ought to accept anything particularly ordered for them. But the alternative has always been, do you accept it or do you do without? Because these things have been evolutionary and they have to evolve -- a way of thinking and laws that make it possible for you to have these things. And just to do without isn't going to make it . . . make it come.

Of course, we've done pretty well. I think we're moving in the right direction.

RLC: Now you're speaking of Terre Haute?

JONES: Terre Haute. Terre Haute is not doing any better than anyplace. I think they're doing as well. When I look around and see what they're doing other places, I think they're . . . of course, there are people that say they aren't, but I . . .

RLC: Um hm. Actually, the subject of our interview sort of ends with 1970, so I won't get too involved with the present. I do want to discuss World War II with you a little bit. How did World War II affect black people, particularly, in Terre Haute?

JONES: Well, as I said before, black people have always benefitted when wars occurred.

RLC: The increased economic . . .

JONES: Yeah. You see, actually, most of the time there are more black people, proportionately, sent to the army than there are white people.

RLC: Why is that?

JONES: Well, they join. They join, for one thing, because they don't have jobs; and they [the services] give them an opportunity to go in and learn a trade and learn to do something and get some money.

RLC: Surely.

JONES: And other people have to give up something to go, so they don't go. I was on the draft board for

JONES: a while. That's what we find. And there are more exemptions given to whites than there are to blacks.

RLC: Um hm. I see.

JONES: So they are, proportionately, . . . they are not in proportion. There are more black people in the army . . . in the armed services. They are not in the higher echelons, but they're in there and out of proportion, too. So the blacks who were left here really had to take over, and they all were employed. Then, of course, you know, they'd take over a lot of places where the white people would leave but . . .

RLC: Um hm. Such as housing . . .

JONES: Well, you know you've got a lot of responsible people, see, among the black people. If they had a chance to work, they'd work. But they never get a chance because the preference is always given to white people. But when labor is in short supply, we got some people in pretty good positions around here. But I think it's come about partly by that. I think some of them . . . of course, a lot of them are imported in here. This Wil Smith down there at the . . . he came here; he's the personnel man down there at General Telephone. Wilburn Smith. Have you ever met him?

RLC: No. Is he a black gentleman?

JONES: He's black, yeah.

RLC: And he comes from . . .

JONES: Very fine person.

RLC: . . . from another area?

JONES: He came from Fort Wayne. And there's another girl down there. I think she came from Champaign. She's a supervisor down there, too, but she came from someplace else. But they were trained away from here. They came here.

RLC: Well, that's always good, I think.

JONES: We've got quite a number of people that have come here. Then we've got a few people that have

JONES: come up through the ranks and made it. But you know when there's an opening, you know, lots of times they fill it and . . . fill the spot of responsibility. Of course, people are looking for responsible people; and when they have so many failures, you know, they're willing to take people that are responsible -- sometimes even if they're black. (laughs) Which is the way . . . that's the way it ought to be, but it hasn't always been that way. And when they can. . . if they can find responsible white people sometimes, they don't take black people. That's the way it goes.

RLC: But you say the wars have created economic opportunity for black people, largely.

JONES: Yes. You see . . . you know this is quite a paradox, when you think about it. When you look in the paper, you see in the paper, all the time, requests for help -- qualified help -- in various industries. These are your skilled people. And it seems quite a paradox, when you think about it. Everybody's talking about hard times, and all these ads /are/ in the paper, and they want people that know how to do something. And they can't find them. They're not there.

But these people who don't know how to do anything, they're just raising sand because they think there ought to be a place for them someplace. There is no place for them really. And other people that are working get mad because they have to pay to help take care of those people -- on welfare and otherwise.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: So (laughs) they don't know anything else to do. They're not prepared.

RLC: At the end of World War II the situation then for blacks in Terre Haute was much better than it was at the beginning . . . say in 1946 . . .

JONES: Oh, yes.

RLC: . . . even after the veterans' return?

JONES: Well, a lot of times some of those boys acquired skills in the army, you know. And those boys that acquired

JONES: skills . . . why it was pretty hard to turn down a veteran, you know, if he's prepared on the job.

RLC: Even if he was black?

JONES: Yeah. It's pretty hard. Some of those boys have gotten those jobs. And after the war, you know, and after people returned from the service, there was kind of a feeling we ought to do something for these people. If you could catch them at that period, you could get a job even if you're black. (laughs)

RLC: Um hm. Um hm.

JONES: I think a lot of that has occurred. Some of these people . . . a lot of these people have made good. They've been responsible people. They were responsible people in the army or navy or wherever they were. When they got in civilian life, they still measured up pretty well.

RLC: Um hm.

Do you find cultural interests among black people in Terre Haute to be somewhat different -- the types of recreation or entertainment that black people here enjoy? Do you think they are substantially different from what white people locally enjoy?

JONES: No. I'll tell you what I think. You know, of course, a lot of people don't agree with it and perhaps don't think about it; but I think the economic strata of the person -- the educational background and their cultural background, whether they are socially deprived or not -- is going to be a determining factor as to how they live. Mainly, people that you see have a different lifestyle and have been so socially deprived and they haven't got to that place. Actually, as I see it, I don't see too much difference between black and white only from a cultural . . . from that standpoint -- the economic conditions under which they have to live and educational background and all that sort of thing. But I've dealt with both of them, and I see some of them are just as . . . (laughs) well, they're socially deprived, too! Well, we've always had them. We had these people over in Taylorville. They've been socially deprived people.

RLC: Right.

JONES: And you've got the people down in the hills of Kentucky and down in Tennessee, you know. They've been socially deprived. They live different from us people. And the black ones and the white ones, it makes no difference what you are as for color. Of course, I think that the white ones have a better chance than the black ones because they don't have their color against them. They just have their background, their cultural background, economic background They've got some of that quality. If they can get out of that, why they can go anyplace. But this is a thing that applies to black people, regardless of whether he has a Ph.D. (laughs) or is just an ordinary person. Until they know them, why when they first see them they apply the same thing. If he's black -- if he's non-white -- why then he's going to be restricted. And they're not going to talk to him much about it, and some people are not going even to entertain the idea of doing anything for them.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: Even when they look up.

RLC: Do you know of other people in Terre Haute who are quite knowledgeable about local history -- about the history of Terre Haute -- particularly in relationship to the blacks? Specific people? You've mentioned various people during the course of the interview, but do any names sort of stand out in your mind of people who would have insight -- useful insight -- into Terre Haute history, especially from the black perspective?

JONES: Um hm. Well, there are a lot of them, of course. Some of them are older. I don't know what the age class you'd want in there now. All these people have lived in very interesting periods.

There's an old man named Ernest Anderson lives out in Lost Creek. He's a pretty interesting person.

RLC: What was his field?

JONES: No, he's not a professional man. He's not a professional man. He's just . . . he has been a head

JONES: of an NAACP /National Association for the Advancement of Colored People/ though, and he's been a church worker, and he's been around. He's been in the community a long time. He's in that area out there. Now, he knows a lot about that history out in Lost Creek. That's an area I don't know too much about.

I know South End history. He knows a lot about . . . see at one time there was . . . well, they've done real well out there in Lost Creek. That's not in Terre Haute proper, you know, but it's been considered a part of Terre Haute. There are a lot of old land owners out there you know, and they've done quite a bit. They've got a cemetery out there -- Lost Creek cemetery -- and a recreation place out there. They've done real well out there, and they've got a lot of . . . they've owned a lot of land out there, just the original people out there. That's Anderson.

RLC: Ernest Anderson.

JONES: Ernest Anderson.

RLC: Do you think Terre Haute has had its share of black leadership over the years or . . . compared with other similar communities in the Midwest?

JONES: No, leadership is a kind of a . . . it's kind of a funny thing, you know. What you mean by leadership is . . . well, it isn't the exact thing, really, when you think about it now. Leadership, for the most part among the black people . . . unfortunately we have made uptown.

RLC: I see. You mean . . .

JONES: And it ought not to be that way. You see, grass root leadership is really what you think about when you think of leadership. And you don't have too much of your grass root leadership. And the reason you don't is because, for the most part, the people who are popular with the people cease to be leaders if they can't get anything for the people.

See, a leader has to be /a/ person that people have confidence in, but he also has to be a person who is able to get something done. Because those

JONES: people dump him as a leader if he isn't able to do anything for them. See? Of course, that's true of everyone in a way. We assess leadership on the basis of what they're able to do.

RLC: Right.

JONES: Not how much confidence you have in them, because confidence comes and goes. We elect the man and if he can't do anything, we put him out like we put Carter out. (laughs) Well, he's no longer a leader because he didn't get it done -- didn't get the job done. Reagan may suffer the same

But leadership among black people has been limited because . . . I don't know, people have always been afraid. It seems as if, that the leadership -- and I mean by the actual leadership of every community, the bosses, really -- have never wanted to have a black really who was able to get things done. Because if he was able to get things done, he'd challenge them because he could call the people off and organize them against them. So, they never really . . . we've never really had a person who was able to do that because the power structure won't let it happen. And when they're not able to do anything, they lose their leadership ability -- leadership appeal, even. Unfortunately, that's what Martin Luther King used to always be saying, "Let me have a victory someplace. Let me do something. Let me accomplish something." But he never did get to do as much, outside of lead a march. They let him lead a march, but they didn't really let him come to grips with what ought to . . . what really he had a dream about. And that's true of almost all the leaders.

And I've seen them come. You have a leader, and if he goes to them and asks for something, they won't let him . . . they won't give it to him. The only thing they've been able to do -- and I've always deplored it-- the leadership has been always assessed on the basis of whether they could get somebody out of jail or /let/ go on bond /of someone/ that ought to be in jail. (laughs) And that's what leadership is that's been around. "I'll let you run the crap game or a bootleg place because you're a leader." And I think that's always been the wrong assessment. Of course, you know, you have that all over, you know. People have been able to do things and violate the law

JONES: and get people out of jail when they ought to be in jail because of who they are -- because of their connections.

But the bosses have always been able to maintain the distance that will keep them from being actual leaders or the boss. Of course, a boss . . . bossism is really what probably happened most places. Almost every city has a boss -- political boss or it may be a financial boss. Or a boss . . .

RLC: Leaders in the community who influence opinion.

JONES: Now, we've had some good people here in Terre Haute. I know at one time almost everybody blamed Tony Hulman for vetoing or letting things go. And that's true that there're a lot of things that didn't happen because of Tony. So now the leadership was really . . . well, you have this course up there at Indiana State, you know. Leadership.

I was part of it at one time, but I could see what it amounted to, because leadership, it has to be . . . the leadership has to come from people who are able to effect change. You actually aren't a leader unless you are able to effect change from the people that follow you and the people that are above you. If you can't do that, you're really . . . you're not a leader. And so I . . . this is the reason I say I don't know . . . this is a term that you use rather loosely.

I don't know whether it applies to most people, but I think there are some people that could get some things done. But they were always limited! And it wouldn't be a matter of right and wrong either; it'd be a matter of power and there have always been bosses who will retain power that they relinquish to no one.

RLC: Can you name any black leaders in Terre Haute who you think have been unusually effective in the past in the black community, in helping the black community or helping Terre Haute in general, of course, but I mean especially the black community?

JONES: Yes, there have been leaders. They've come and gone. Some of them have been repudiated. I don't

JONES: know. You know this is a hard thing to retain from time to time. I mean just indefinitely. And every period has had its leadership. At one time, I guess J. J. Hoover. He was an older man, but he was among the leaders.

RLC: How do you spell that name?

JONES: H-o-o-v-e-r. There were two of them. There was . . . let's see. He had a son, but now he was a political leader. And he had a power. And, of course, most business people have been regarded as leaders. Of course, we've even had people in business that have been in leadership roles. Dr. Edwards is one of them.

RLC: Dr. Edwards? Was he a physician?

JONES: W. A. Edwards. He's a dentist. He's retired. He's not active now.

Of course, this has always been based on followers. You see, almost all professional people have some followers. All preachers have some followers.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: And these people are regarded as leaders. Now, you see when it comes down to designating any particular one person, this becomes a very difficult thing just the same as you'd have a hard time designating any particular leadership when it comes down to the white community. Who is the leader?

But now really when it comes right down to it, it's going to be a person who is able to effect change.

RLC: Right.

JONES: And the people who have been able to effect change mostly in Terre Haute happen to have been the financial people.

RLC: Business men.

JONES: It's been the Blumbergs and it's been the Hulmans. And then in history you'll find the Fairbankses and all these other people . . . and, oh, they're in history. I can't recall all of them, but

JONES: I . . . I don't remember as well as I used to. But McKeens, you know, those are the people. And they're in all the histories around here -- financial histories and all the deeds and everything. Those are the people that called the shots. And this is the leadership. This is the leadership. In fact, there wasn't anything done without their okay. Now, this is what you mean really; this is really what you mean by leadership.

RLC: Um hum.

JONES: The people that are able to get things done, and there're not too many of them. And when it comes down to designating any particular one person, that's hard to do. You'd have a hard time really right now designating a person. Of course, now the president of the college there would be . . . or the university here would be described in the leadership, but I don't believe you would call him an actual leader.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: He is one of the leaders. And he'd have to be . . . he represents the school here, the university here, and that's a very big group of people.

RLC: Right.

JONES: I think /John A./ Logan was one of the men that was very effective.

RLC: Right. Um hm. Dr. Logan.

JONES: Yeah. And there've been quite a number of them. They've all had their role, but just when you could come down and say who was the actual person that could pull strings and get the job done . . .

RLC: How about black clergy in Terre Haute?

JONES: Well, now, of course, Reverend Hord was one of the people into it.

RLC: That's H-o-r-d, isn't it?

JONES: H-o-r-d.

RLC: Uh-huh. I think I know him.

JONES: Yeah, I know, because his wife is a librarian down there. Down at this library, yeah.

Of course, he's not here any more. He was head of the NAACP quite a number of years. He was the man that was responsible for, well, the Hyte Center for the most part. He did lots of campaigning on that.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: But as I've said before, leadership comes and goes.

RLC: How does the clergy work in Terre Haute? Do you think the white and black clergy work pretty well together in this town or . . .

JONES: No, I don't think they do. I belong to . . . I belonged to the church council at one time. Of course, I still work with the church. No, I think the Methodist churches work with them. The Methodist churches work very well, but I don't think the Baptist churches work very well. And they've always called the white community hypocritical. And this is . . . I'm not willing to go that far. I know they haven't done all they ought to do. I'm not willing to go that far for the reason that I think that someplace they don't . . . I don't think all the people know what to do. I don't think all the white people know what to do anymore than I know what to do. And I think there's a lot of things I don't know what to do about either. I just know we ought to be working at it. I'm sincere about that.

RLC: Do you think the clergy can have a very important role in Terre Haute if they work together?

JONES: Oh, yes. I think so because they're supposed to be talking about right and wrong. They're supposed to be talking about brotherhood, but they always break down on that brotherhood, see. And when they're not consistent on that, why the rest of it goes out the board, out the window. And I'm sorry because I think that's one of the areas that they could be working in. But they don't do it.

RLC: We have a few black professors at Indiana State.

JONES: Yeah, I know them.

RLC: Have they been able to effect change?

JONES: Yes. Well, I think . . . I think Miss Casson . . .
[do] you know her?

RLC: Yes.

JONES: I think she's been very good since she's been here. She's currently head on the NAACP. Yeah, she worked with us down at Hyte Center. I'm on the board down there (laughs), too. She works with that.

RLC: Now, the Hyte Center opened when? It's been in the last ten years.

JONES: Oh, boy, no! It's been longer than that.

RLC: Longer than that?

JONES: Oh, yeah. I forgot though. I've got a brochure. I don't remember the year.

RLC: Would you say it's had a very healthy effect on Terre Haute, do you think?

JONES: Yes. Yes. You know that's where . . . well, you didn't know Charles T. Hyte. Now, Charles T. Hyte was the leader of Terre Haute.

RLC: Was he a black man?

JONES: Yeah, he was a black man.

RLC: Charles T. Hyte.

JONES: Charles T. Hyte. He's the man for whom the Hyte Center was named. He was an educator here. He was principal of the Washington school. A very fine man. He's been dead. He was a member of my club. I belong to what's called [the] Young Men's Civic Club.

RLC: I see.

JONES: Hamilton and Conyers and all of them belong to it. We all belong to the club together. But . . . what was I going to tell you about it?

RLC: The effects of the Hyte Center.

JONES: Oh, the Hyte Center?

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: The Hyte Center was born of a lot of unrest. I was on the first board of the Hyte Center. The Hyte Center was originally down there in a little alley, down there in the street department . . . where the street department is now. They had a building down there -- a small building. And they never were able to do very much with it, and they're still not able to do as much as we ought to do with this building because we are not properly funded.

About that time there was a lot of unrest. There was fire-bombing and so the white community was quite upset. You see this was the time that Rap Brown and all those fellows were doing it -- throwing these bombs. And they did some of it around here in Terre Haute. The white community felt that they had to do something for black youth, give them a building or something. And one of the things they did (I think Tony Hulman was perhaps behind it), they put a railroad car down there. Did you ever hear about that?

RLC: I think so, yes.

JONES: Well, they tore the car up, you know. They got mad about it because they thought it was a symbol of a dupe or something that relegated everything or nothing to the railroad. And as long as that was along the railroad on the siding here . . . I think it would have been a pretty good thing. I was for it at the time. I thought it could be a conversation piece, but the community rebelled. In fact I got . . . I was criticized for it, too. I got . . . my building was spray starched and a little written up and everything else. So, they were mad at me, too!

But the Hyte Center came out of that, because they launched a campaign to get the Hyte Center built. And they made it a priority. It was almost a million dollars. And it was Reverend Hord that led that campaign. He was very popular at that time.

So . . . but it was a thing that was only half-hearted. Some of the people wanted them to have it,

JONES: and some of the people were afraid not to have it.
(laughs) So, they did it -- some of them for the
right reason, some of them for the wrong reason.

RLC: Um hm. Um hm.

But you think it has been effective in the
years that it's been open?

JONES: It can be. Yes, it's not /totally/ effective
yet though. It's never reached its potential. It's
never been funded properly. This year they denied the
funding. They finally gave us a little bit of money
which is not enough. We don't have enough to hire
anybody. You see we can't put a program on. We
finally went into a skating program; we took some of
the money and invested in skates, and we're going to
have skating there. We're going to make a little
money to help run the Center on that. But that isn't
the real answer. You know some of the answer has
to be publicly. . . some of these places have to be
publicly funded. And they're not supposed to make
enough money to pay their way. They're necessities
(they're necessary things), and you have to do it
/mostly by public funding/.

Now, schools or recreation places or YMCA -- all
of those things -- are necessary; and it isn't going
to depend upon whether they pay their way or not.
You've got to have them.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: And I think of the Hyte Center, and I think if
those people there ever got that idea, it could be
properly funded and it could do an awful big job.
It's the best-equipped facility and the biggest facility
around of that sort.

RLC: For blacks?

JONES: For anybody.

RLC: For anybody.

JONES: For anybody, for anybody. It has the equipment.
It has the space. It had everything! We had a
clinic down there. A free clinic. We had free legal
aid and all that sort of thing. We had a feeding
program. We had a lot of things down there.

JONES: But all of those things . . . they don't pay their way.

RLC: No.

JONES: Because they've got to be publicly funded. Of course, it's been hard to get responsible leadership, too. I think that's been one of the problems. We've had some problems on directorship. I have to admit that.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: And that perhaps had something to do with the funding, but zero funding was . . . I don't think that was right.

RLC: No.

JONES: I don't think that's right.

I think they ought to get their house in order. And I don't think the house is in order /fully but is being organized to proceed more orderly/.

END OF TAPE

TAPE 2-SIDE 1

RLC: Why don't we talk for a few minutes about the dispersal of business in Terre Haute -- the creation of Honey Creek Square and the shopping malls and so on? How that has affected blacks.

JONES: Well, you know you had . . . you've got about four of them you know. The first one was out here at Meadows . . . Meadows Center. That's out on 25th Street you know. Then /came/ the North Plaza, and then South 7th Street, then Honey Creek -- which is the biggest and it's growing and continuing to grow.

RLC: Um hm. Um hm.

JONES: Of course, that's done effectively . . . done away pretty much with neighborhood businesses. You don't have neighborhood grocery stores. You don't have neighborhood anything. You don't have any neighborhood drugstores. I had one of the last neighborhood drugstores. There were . . . well, there

JONES: were three of us who closed that year. Three neighborhood drugstores.

RLC: The competition from the shopping centers was too much.

JONES: Well, yes. Well . . . of course, these were all inclusive you know. They all have drugstores in them.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: And even the super . . . Krogers' have drug departments in them now, you know. So, this has been a factor. It's been a factor to change the shopping habits of the whole city, not only in some neighborhoods.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: But, of course, whatever other affects the rest of the city affects blacks. And so, they're a part of it, too. So they're dispersed. Their shopping is in those areas.

RLC: Well, now when I go to Honey Creek Square for example, I don't see many black people. Do they . . .

JONES: Well now, you must remember they only represent five out of a hundred.

RLC: Right.

JONES: Five per cent. That's in Greater Terre Haute. (laughs) So . . . no, you're not going to see very many.

RLC: But they do go there?

JONES: Oh, yes. They go everywhere.

RLC: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

JONES: They go everywhere. There's no concentration for them. Now, really, they're not concentrated anyplace. See, there used to be a time down at 13th and College where I operated, that's where all the black people would be.

RLC: Um hm.

JONES: Everybody in town would be down there.

RLC: Well, did black people ever go downtown or
7th and Wabash to shop or . . .

JONES: Oh, yeah. Well, you . . . sure, they had to
go down there. There was . . . that was the main
business area.

RLC: That was the main shopping center.

JONES: . . . but what I'm talking about, you didn't see
very many. I've gone downtown and wouldn't see any
colored people at all down there. You know, they
get lost.

RLC: To purchase so many things they had to go there.

JONES: Yeah. Sure. Sure. That's where they'd be if
they went anyplace at all. You had to go downtown
for most of the things. Neighborhood stores didn't
carry only a few little things, you know. The neigh-
borhood stores, they had a lot of neighborhood stores,
you know -- grocery stores, drugstores . . .

RLC: But not furniture and clothing stores.

JONES: Oh, no. Oh, you've always . . . you've had
some furniture stores and some retail stores all over
town. You still have some new stores in some places,
you know. Some new equipment. But they're going be-
cause I don't think they're going to be able to stay
anyplace. The resale places might stay, but the new
stores won't stay. No.

So that's why I think the blacks have been af-
fected just about the same as white people. I don't
think there's been any difference.

There has been an increase in employment. I
think we have a few more black people employed be-
cause they've had to recruit a lot of new sales
people. And black people have gotten part of it.
I noticed some down at Honey Creek Square and down-
town. That used to not be.

RLC: You mean uptown . . . you mean north?

JONES: Yeah. Well, in the business district there.
Down Wabash, that's what I'm talking about.

RLC: Oh! Uh-huh.

JONES: I call it downtown. (laughs)

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: We always called it that you know. Of course,
it's between north and south now, so we can't say
that I guess, maybe. But I'm going . . .

RLC: But shopping in Vigo County is quite dispersed
now. You have your . . .

JONES: I know it is. I know it is.

RLC: . . . and they're talking about a new center on
the east side and so on.

Well, this means that blacks have to drive more,
which is expensive.

JONES: Oh, yes.

RLC: Has it affected neighborhood patterns? Has it
affected housing for blacks in Terre Haute any, would
you say, the dispersal of business?

JONES: Well, I think . . . of course, blacks are moving
all over Terre Haute now.

RLC: All over . . .

JONES: But they're moving in . . . they're taking the
central city . . . the central part of the city. Of
course, there's a lot of them on the outskirts, too.
They're moving into better homes there. They're
building some homes. But for the most part, blacks
are taking center of city . . . center of the city.
And that's happening in Indianapolis. It's happen-
ing everywhere; Chicago, anyplace you go, it's hap-
pening, see, because the older part of the city is
being occupied by black people. I never did think
it would happen, but they're on 7th Street, they're
on 8th Street. They . . .

RLC: They used . . . 7th and 8th Streets used to be rather . . .

JONES: Yeah. That used to be rather exclusive. But see, these people all moved out and the black people moved in. They're everywhere . . . just about anyplace you go, you'll see them.

RLC: Well, you mentioned black people moving out. Is it possible for a black person to move into Lincolnshire or Woodridge or whatever?

JONES: Well, now, this Wil Smith's out there. Now, he's not in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire's the other . . . the one south of Lincolnshire. I think it's . . .

RLC: Terra Vista.

JONES: Terra Vista [Youngstown]. They're out there you know. Conyers is out there. He was out there. That's where he had his home. And Lyda is out there. There were a lot of people out there. A lot of people out there.

And they're going south now. There are quite a number of people there. And they're in apartments. I think on the whole they're doing pretty good.

These are people that are able to buy and to get it. But Dr. Hammonds had a problem down there where he bought at first. The fellow [who was the next door neighbor], he's a good friend of his now. But he saw black! I know him. He's a druggist. I know him. And he was one that was just raising sand when Hammonds was going to buy the house. He was raising sand. But now he's one of his good friends. (laughs) He found out it wouldn't kill him, but he didn't know it at first. (laughs heartily)

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: So . . . I think things are changed. It's changed for everybody but the real [deprived black] people, and they're going to have a hard time.

RLC: Well, is it still hard for blacks in Terre Haute to find places to rent and to buy or do you think their housing is . . .

JONES: They're having some problem. Of course, you know, there always will be. You know, of course, Jews have had problems acquiring places all the time. They can't always get where they want either. And they've got . . . it isn't all the time money. It's a matter of just people don't want you there. And, of course, I guess when you . . . it's all right if they . . . I don't want to be anyplace when they wouldn't want me to be there, but that's what it is. Of course, now, if you don't have any money, see, you've got to go to a lending agency. And lending agencies always defer to people around. They don't want to make enemies either. So they won't make you a loan if the neighbors don't want you there. That's the way . . . that's the best way to keep you out. If they don't make you a loan, you won't be there and then nobody's mad.

RLC: But if a black person can pay . . . well, of course, can afford to buy a house outright, there are no problems then?

JONES: Well, there are not very many people that have enough money to . . .

RLC: No. There aren't many white people either.
(both laugh)

JONES: That's where the catch is!

RLC: Right.

JONES: That's where the catch is, really. But, of course, I don't know. I had . . . I don't think that's too serious because there's always someplace you can go.

Now, there used to be a time when black people didn't have anyplace to go at all. But I think there's always some community that will accept black people. There's always some place. Unfortunately, there's a lot of people that are making money out of it by changing neighborhood and they sell out again. Of course, black people are actually . . . history will show that they pay more money for a used house than white people because lots of times the community they want to be in, they'll pay extra money to be in there. And they are not going to ask twice how much it is. Then the rest of the people run, and

JONES: that takes the rest of the property down. Well, it takes it down below theirs because (laughs) they paid too much for it anyhow.

RLC: And so then they lose out economically.

JONES: Everybody. And they're all mad, see, about those people moving in.

RLC: Right.

JONES: But . . . no, the loan . . . the lending, the insurance, these are big factors in preventing people from moving into areas.

But I think the fair housing /acts/ and all these things have changed that a whole lot. There's not too much . . . of course, they obey the letter of the law, but they don't obey the spirit of the law. And, of course, you're not going to get that done for a long time.

RLC: Um hm. But until recently, would you say all the blacks in Vigo County lived in what you call the central south side near where you live, around 13th Street?

JONES: Well, that's where they started, yeah. Let's see, there was that . . . on Spruce Street was one of the good areas. My home was out on Spruce Street when I sold it.

RLC: That's north, of course.

JONES: Yeah. I sold my home.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: But I lived out there. But it was a black community. It's out near Lincoln School, you know -- the old Lincoln School. And the principal -- the former principal of that school -- helped build that community, built it from the standpoint of pride. Most of those people have died and the community has deteriorated since then. But it's . . . it was one of the real good /communities/.

RLC: One of the better black neighborhoods.

JONES: Yeah. That was it. That was supposed to be the Gold Coast. (laughs)

RLC: I see.

JONES: I know some . . . there's still some nice homes out there. There're still some nice homes, but they're all . . .

You know actually as far as housing is concerned, see black people have never really had a place where they could start from scratch and plan it and build it so everything would kind of fit. You see, you move into the community. You move in with some poor people, and they got one kind of house. And you move in there and you build a better house. But your neighbor doesn't have the kind of house.

See, planned communities, you know, where you can go in and live and all be that size . . . that type of house, minimum standards, all that sort of thing.

My boy's in one of those kind of communities. He's in Forest Park.

RLC: In Cincinnati.

JONES: Forest Park. In fact he was president of the housing commission out there for a number of years. But they had a planned community, and they had minimum standards. They've got some fine houses out there. Now, everything is painted and they have to be painted. The housing people make them do it.

RLC: I see. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. That's . . .

JONES: It's planned. It's really . . . but you know you can't do that where you just go out and build next to where there's already a house. Some of the houses are sitting up close to the street and some of them are sitting back, and that doesn't make a good community. And we haven't had any of those kind of communities.

RLC: In Terre Haute?

JONES: No. I mean black people haven't had them, see. It's always been a place where they've had to start, and they start with what they had, and they had to try to develop it into something nice.

RLC: There's a trend today to buy older homes and rehabilitate them? On 17th Street, for example, they have just taken an 80-year-old house and fixed it up very nicely. Are black people tending to do that sort of thing?

JONES: Some of them are. But most of them aren't.

RLC: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

JONES: You know there's been a stigma that goes with black neighborhoods so long that most people will go out and try to build one someplace else.

RLC: But the older houses . . .

JONES: A new house. Of course, you've been having trouble. You've been having trouble getting the money.

RLC: Uh-huh.

JONES: You have to have some expertise on it or some idea what you can make out of a house to rehabilitate. I did . . . I've done that. I've got quite a bit of property where I've been able to do that myself. Contracted and remodeled it you know. I've quite a bit of property I've remodeled. I could always see what you could make out of it though. A lot of people can't see what you can make out of an old house that's got all the windows out and the windows are different shapes and everything. (laughs) They can't see what you can do with one of those kind of houses. I was talking to a boy the other day about that.

RLC: Now, there is government money available or low-cost loans available for that purpose.

JONES: That's right. Yeah. Even some grants! I don't know how long it's going to be, you know, but some of those people are actually getting grants. You know the Redevelopment /Department/ had some grants where you actually didn't have to have any

JONES: money. Just wanted to give you so much money to fix it up. And they'd lend you some, too. At low interest money.

RLC: But I think ultimately that really benefits the community.

JONES: Well, I think it was one of the good programs though. I hate to see them tear all these houses down.

RLC: Right.

JONES: Some of them could be used. That homesteading program is a very good program.

RLC: Urban Homesteading, um hm. Yeah.

Are many blacks getting involved in that?
Well, not too many in Terre Haute, you say.

JONES: No.

RLC: No.

JONES: Well, I guess there's some but there's not as many as there ought to be. But you know a lot of people can't see that. See, people that have had old homes so long, they don't want an old home.

RLC: (laughs)

JONES: I've seen people that . . . they don't want to keep an old piece of furniture either. A lot of people go in for these antiques. I've been buying old furniture all my life. I own my old furniture.
(laughs)

RLC: (laughs)

JONES: Well, I've been a-rambling.

RLC: All right. Well, thank you very much. And you seemed to indicate during the course of your remarks that there is some future in Terre Haute for blacks, and things are . . .

JONES: Oh, I think so. I think it's going to be based

JONES: on what the economy does. I think if the economy comes up, I think black people are going to have their part. But if it's a limited economy, I think they're going to be worse off. Because they're always worse off, I mean, when there's a preference.

RLC: Yes.

JONES: They're not preferred people.

RLC: Yes.

Well, this has been most interesting, Mr. Winton D. Jones, a native of Terre Haute. This is Side 3 of the interview of June 24.

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